

Message Text

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17
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 ARA-06 EB-07

OMB-01 IO-13 ACDA-07 /086 W
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O R 101005Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2187
INFO:RUKORE/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7403
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINPAC HONOLULU
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13673

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

SUMMARY. DURING PAST WEEK LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE HAS GONE FROM DISCUSSION OF COMPROMISE, TO SHARPENING CONFRONTATION, TO RENEWED CONSIDERATION OF COMPROMISE. THIS IS NOT SURPRISING SINCE NEITHER SIDE CAN HAVE ITS WAY AND A SHOWDOWN BRINGS WITH IT POSSIBILITY OF PARTY SPLIT. MIKI'S LATEST COMPROMISE PROPOSAL CALLS FOR PROMPT CONVENING OF AN EXTRAORDINARY DIET AND AN OCTOBER LDP CONVENTION, WHICH WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY REPLACE HIM AS LDP PRESIDENT. INASMUCH AS IT WOULD NOT AFFECT HIS POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER, HOWEVER, HIS OPPONENTS ARE SEEKING FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF HIS INTENTIONS. WHILE ALL OF THIS TAKES TIME, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE COMPROMISE IS LIKELY.

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END SUMMARY.

1. IN A SITUATION WHERE PRIMIN MIKI IS UNABLE TO COMPEL OBEDIENCE OF HIS CABINET AND PARTY, AND THOSE OPPOSED TO HIM ARE UNABLE TO FORCE HIM OUT, IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT EVENTS WENT FULL CIRCLE THIS WEEK. INITIAL LDP LEADERSHIP MEDIATION PROPOSAL -- CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE CABINET AND PARTY LEADERSHIP SHUFFLE, EARLY DIET SESSION, WITH DEFERRED DECISION ON WHETHER MIKI OR SUCCESSOR WILL LEAD LDP INTO ELECTION -- WAS REJECTED AFTER THREE DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH MIKI'S OPPONENTS WITHIN THE LDP. MIKI AND PARTY LEADERSHIP THEN SOUGHT ANTI-MIKI FORCES' AGREEMENT TO PROMPT CONVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION TO TAKE UP IMPORTANT BUDGET-RELATED LEGISLATION. IN RESPONSE, MIKI'S OPPONENTS STUBBORNLY REITERATED THEIR DEMANDS FOR MIKI'S RESIGNATION. AS CONFRONTATION SHARPENED, AND ALONG WITH IT POSSIBILITY OF A PARTY SPLIT, A NEW MEDIATION PROPOSAL EMERGED AND IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED.

2. NEW PROPOSAL WAS SUGGESTED SEPTEMBER 9 BY LABOR MINISTER HASEGAWA, MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF ANTI-MIKI CAMP. HE CALLED FOR PROMPT CONVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION TO BE FOLLOWED BY AN EXTRAORDINARY LDP CONVENTION, PRESUMABLY TO REPLACE MIKI AS LDP PRESIDENT. AFTER CONSULTING WITH LDP LEADERSHIP, MIKI HIMSELF SEPTEMBER 10 PROPOSED TO CABINET SEPTEMBER 13 OPENING OF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION TO CONSIDER IMPORTANT LEGISLATION, WITH EXTRAORDINARY LDP CONVENTION DURING OCTOBER TO DETERMINE LDP ELECTION POSTURE. HE ASKED FOR RESPONSE OF HIS CABINET -- AND BY EXTENSION ANTI-MIKI CAMP GENERALLY -- WITHIN SIX HOURS.

3. INITIAL REACTION TO MIKI'S PROPOSAL HAS BEEN MIXED. MANY IN ANTI-MIKI CAMP SEE THIS AS MIKI'S LAST BEST OFFER BEFORE POSSIBLE RESIGNATION OF PARTY LEADERSHIP AND UNILATERAL CALLING OF DIET SESSION. ON THIS BASIS, THEY URGE ACCEPTANCE. OTHERS, HOWEVER, POINT OUT THAT MIKI HAS NOT AGREED TO STEP DOWN EITHER AS PARTY PRESIDENT OR AS PRIME MINISTER, AND EVEN AN EXTRAORDINARY LDP CONVENTION COULD REPLACE HIM ONLY AS LDP PRESIDENT, NOT PRIME MINISTER. ALL ADMIT, HOWEVER, THAT HIS AGREEMENT TO A PARTY CONVENTION

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IS A SIGNIFICANT CONCESSION. MOST ALSO AGREE SOME DELAY IN OPENING OF DIET SESSION, SAY, UNTIL SEPTEMBER 16, IS INEVITABLE. AT THIS WRITING, IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER PROPOSAL WILL BE ACCEPTED BUT, AS WE HAVE SAID EARLIER, WE BELIEVE THIS OR A SIMILAR COMPROMISE IS LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED, IF ONLY AFTER FURTHER DELAYS.

4. IF THIS COMPROMISE WERE ACCEPTED, DIET SESSION MIGHT OPEN

AS EARLY AS SEPTEMBER 16 AND CONCLUDE IN MID-OCTOBER;
LDP CONVENTION WOULD BE HELD DURING LATTER PART OF OCTOBER
WITH ELECTIONS IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER. (WE
HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT FUKUDA PREFERS A DECEMBER
5 ELECTION DATE.)

5. IF, ON OTHER HAND, COMPROMISE IS REJECTED, WE WOULD
RETURN TO SITUATION WHICH PREVAILED FOR MOST OF THIS
WEEK. MIKI WOULD THREATEN TO OPEN DIET UNILATERALLY TO
TAKE UP URGENT GOVERNMENT BUSINESS. ANTI-MIKI FORCES
WOULD COUNTER WITH PROMISE OF CABINET REBELLION IF HE
ATTEMPTED TO DO SO AND, IF HE REPLACED CABINET OPPONENTS
WITH THOSE SYMPATHETIC TO HIS VIEWPOINT, THEY WOULD ONCE
AGAIN CONVENE AN LDP CAUCUS TO STRIP HIM OF PARTY PRESI-
DENCY AND POSSIBLY EVEN READ HIM OUT OF LDP ALTOGETHER.
IN THIS CIRCUMSTANCE, EARLY CONVENING OF DIET WITH
IMMEDIATE DISSOLUTION AND OCTOBER ELECTION IS PROBABLE.
HOWEVER, INASMUCH AS THIS PROSPECT MIGHT ALSO LAD TO
PARTY SPLIT, ADDITIONAL ATTEMPTS AT COMPROMISE ARE LIKELY.

6. HOW IS THE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING IN MIDST OF THIS
TURMOIL? SHORT ANSWER IS REASONABLY WELL. BRAZILIAN
PRESIDENT GEISEL WILL BE GREETED NEXT WEEK ON SCHEDULE.
DESPITE WORRIES, THERE IS NO OBVIOUS ILL EFFECT ON
ECONOMY; BUSINESS AND TRADE CONTINUE AS USUAL. DAY-TO-DAY
BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT IS HANDLED BY POWERFUL BUREAUCRACY
MUCH AS ALWAYS. AND EVEN MAN IN THE STREET APPEARS
RELATIVELY UNCONCERNED, TREATING LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE
MUCH AS HE WOULD A FAMILY SQUABBLE. BUT DECISIONS MOVE
MORE SLOWLY THAN USUAL AND EACH IS CAREFULLY WEIGHED
FOR ITS DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT. COMMUNICATION
AMONG TOP GOVERNMENT LEADERS IS OFTEN STRAINED AND
CLEARLY NO NEW AND CONTROVERSIAL INITIATIVES ARE LIKELY.
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THUS WHILE MOST HERE ARE CURRENTLY RATHER TOLERANT OF
PRESENT SITUATION, THERE ARE LIMIT TO THIS TOLERANCE, AND
POLITICIANS ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THAT FACT.
SHOESMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL LEADERS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TOKYO13673
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760342-0299
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760971/aaaacipa.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE SUMMARY. DURING PAST WEEK LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE HAS GONE FROM DISCUSSION OF COMPROMISE, TO SHARPENING CONFR
TAGS: PINT, JA, (MIKI, TAKEO)
To: STATE SEOUL
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006